

SQ3R for reading & making notes

This is a system originally devised by Francis Robinson of Ohio State University in the 1940s (Pauk & Fiore, 2000, p65). A range of versions of it can be found in study guides, both in print and online. This is one interpretation of the five-step method.

- Adapt the method to suit you, your purpose and your subject area.



Top tip

Before starting become familiar with the organisation of the text book. Your course outline will help you identify which parts you need.



Survey

Survey: Skim and scan the chosen chapter or part of the text you need to study to get an overall view. Pay attention to diagrams and images. The headings and subheadings will signpost the general structure. This should only take a few minutes.

Question

Question: Write down the questions you would like to clarify. You can also turn relevant headings and subheadings in the text into questions. Some questions may be based on an assignment.

1: Read

Read a section of the text once without making notes. The length of the section will depend on what you are comfortable with. Keep your questions in mind. Is the text relevant? What might be useful? You might study a key diagram in detail that goes with the text.



2: Recall

Recall: Mark the page and close the book. Go over what you have just read in your own mind. Write down a summary or outline including key phrases. Concentrate on the most relevant material. You can sketch out and annotate a key diagram. Seek to answer some of the questions you have.

- If you're finding it hard to remember what you've just read glance over the section again.
- Now read a new section and repeat R1 and R2 until you get to the end of the chapter or part of the text you want to study.

3: Review

Review: Look over your notes and check that you have the main points from the text. Check any sketched diagrams for accuracy.

- Add value to your notes. Put in page numbers and add in key quotations (particularly important if you are reading for an assignment as you will need to reference your sources).
- You should have answers for the questions you started out with.
- Keep the list of questions to test your memory.
- Have you some new questions to add?

Ref: Pauk, W. & Fiore, J.P. (2000) *Succeed in College!* Houghton Mifflin, Boston & NY.